



# Whitney's Story

*I wish to go to Hawaii*

**Whitney, 9**  
heart condition



Whitney cheers on her beloved Edmonton Oilers, loves watermelon, the colour blue, and enjoys figure skating. After watching a biopic on pro-surfer Bethany Hamilton, the nine-year-old became engrossed in surf culture, tropical beaches, and dolphins.

When Whitney was a day old, she was diagnosed with several heart defects. Four weeks later she underwent surgery, and then two more open-heart surgeries. "We know Whitney's battle is far from over and as she gets older there will be new challenges, but she is strong and constantly amazes us," said her mom, Stephanie. "She truly is a heart warrior".

The family learned about Make-A-Wish Canada when a nurse approached them during an appointment. When Whitney learned she qualified for a wish, the process of waiting for her wish was a positive distraction from her medical challenges and the pandemic. "It gave Whitney a lot of joy, to dream and look forward to this gift," recalled Stephanie.

Whitney's love for the beach inspired her wish to visit Hawaii with her family. She had the opportunity to learn to surf, see dolphins and marvel at palm trees and turquoise waters. "This little girl had to go through so much in her life with no complaints and so much strength and love," said Stephanie. "She truly deserved this special gift, and we were so blessed to share in all the wonderful things with her."

Stephanie added that a wish is a special and amazing gift that makes a wish child feel like the most important person and special in every way. Hope is essential for children with critical illnesses, and its life-changing power is unlocked when wishes like Whitney's are granted.